

Hamilton

FLAG DISPLAY AND OPERATIONS POLICY

Campus and Ceremonial Flag Operations

Policy Owner	Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning
Office of Primary Responsibility	Facilities Management
Offices with Coordinating Responsibility	Campus Safety; College Events; Communications and Marketing
Approved By	Steven Tepper, President
Effective Date	July 14, 2026
Last Revised	July 14, 2026
Next Review	Three years from effective date
Related Policies	Campus Posting Policy; Community Living Policies and Procedures; Freedom of Expression Policy

1. Purpose

This policy establishes the standards, responsibilities, and procedures for the display of flags on Hamilton College property. It is intended to ensure that flags are displayed with consistency, dignity, and proper protocol; to clarify lines of responsibility for routine and non-routine flag operations; and to give the College community a single, transparent reference for questions about flag display, half-staff observance, and ceremonial use.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all flags displayed on Hamilton College property, and to flags displayed at official College ceremonies. It applies to all faculty, staff, students, contractors, and visitors. The policy governs flag operations only; the display of banners, signs, posters, and other temporary postings is governed by the Campus Posting Policy.

Personal flags displayed inside private residence hall rooms (not visible from outside the building) are addressed under [§10](#) (Residence Halls) and Community Living Policies and Procedures.

3. Governing Authorities

Hamilton College observes flag protocol consistent with the following authorities. Where this policy is silent or ambiguous, these authorities govern:

- United States Flag Code, Title 4, U.S. Code, Chapter 1 (4 U.S.C. § 1–10).
- Title 36, U.S. Code, Chapter 3 (Patriotic Customs).
- New York State Executive Law, Article 19, § 400–403.
- Presidential and Gubernatorial proclamations issued under those authorities.

As a private institution, Hamilton College is not legally bound to follow these proclamations, but does so as a matter of long-standing practice and as the convention shared by most peer institutions.

4. Definitions

- **Full-staff** — position of a flag at the peak of the staff or pole.
- **Half-staff** — position of a flag approximately halfway between the top and bottom of the staff, used as a mark of mourning or respect.
- **Inherently flame resistant** — fabric that will not burn or ignite for the life of the fabric, independent of chemical retardant treatment.
- **Official College ceremony** — convocation, commencement, baccalaureate, inauguration, and other ceremonies designated by the President or the Office of College Events.
- **Order of precedence** — established sequence in which multiple flags are displayed together.
- **Position of honor** — location to the flag's right (observer's left) when displayed with other flags.
- **Speaker's right** — right-hand side of the speaker as the speaker faces the audience.

5. Official College Flags

The following are recognized as official flags of Hamilton College. The U.S. Flag is the only flag flown routinely on Hamilton's exterior flagpoles ([§7](#)). The remaining flags are reserved for ceremonial and indoor use as set out in [§12](#) (Ceremonial Display).

- **The flag of the United States of America** (the National Flag).
- **The flag of the Oneida Indian Nation**, recognized as the flag of a sovereign Nation on whose ancestral homelands the College sits, and gifted to the College by the Oneida Indian Nation in 2024 for use in official ceremonies.
- **The flag of the State of New York.**
- **The Hamilton College flag** (institutional flag).

No other flag is to be displayed on a College flagpole, on the exterior of a College building, or at an official College ceremony, except as specifically authorized under [§11](#) (Other Flag Displays).

6. Permanent Flagpole Locations

Hamilton College maintains the following exterior flagpoles. The U.S. Flag is the only flag routinely displayed at each location.

Location	Routine Display	Operating Office
Campus Road, south of Siuda House	U.S. Flag	Campus Safety
Miller Road, in front of Facilities Management	U.S. Flag	Facilities Management (FM)
Loop Road Athletic Complex	U.S. Flag (game days)	FM Athletics Grounds
Goodfriend Field	U.S. Flag (game days)	FM Athletics Grounds
Withiam Field	U.S. Flag (game days)	FM Athletics Grounds
Love Field	U.S. Flag (game days)	FM Athletics Grounds
Steuben Field	U.S. Flag (game days)	FM Athletics Grounds
Cross-Country Trails	U.S. Flag (event days)	FM Athletics Grounds

Installation of new flagpoles or relocation of existing flagpoles requires the approval of the Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning, in coordination with the Facilities Planning Group.

7. Routine Display of the U.S. Flag

7.1 Hours of Display

The U.S. Flag is customarily displayed only between sunrise and sunset. It may be displayed 24 hours a day at locations where the flag is properly illuminated during hours of darkness.

Hamilton College designates the U.S. Flags at Campus Road / Siuda House and Miller Road / Facilities Management as flown daily. These poles are equipped with appropriate illumination so the flags may remain displayed 24 hours a day.

7.2 Inclement Weather

All-weather flags may be displayed during inclement weather. In conditions of severe wind, ice, or weather expected to damage the flag, the flag should be lowered until conditions improve. Facilities Management and Campus Safety have discretion to lower flags temporarily at their respective flagpoles for weather-related reasons and to replace flags as needed.

7.3 Flag Condition and Disposal

Flags should be inspected regularly and replaced when faded, torn, or otherwise no longer a fitting emblem for display. Worn flags are to be retired in a dignified manner consistent with U.S. Flag Code; Facilities Management coordinates retirement and may, at its discretion, deliver retired flags to a local veterans' service organization for ceremonial disposal.

7.4 Stock and Replacement

Facilities Management maintains a stock of U.S. Flags for the permanent flagpoles, and a smaller stock of New York State, Oneida Indian Nation, and Hamilton College flags for ceremonial use. Replacement flags may be requested through the FM Work Control office.

7.5 Indoor Flag Fire Safety

Flags installed inside College facilities that are (a) hung from or affixed to building structures and (b) intended to remain in place for more than thirty (30) days must be manufactured of inherently flame-resistant materials. Documentation asserting flame-resistant construction should be retained by the responsible office, or by Facilities Management, and made available on request.

8. Half-Staff Observance

Hamilton College lowers the U.S. Flags at its permanent flagpoles to half-staff only in response to formal proclamations issued under federal or New York State law, or on dates designated by federal statute. The College does not initiate independent half-staff observances.

8.1 Authority

The College observes half-staff in response to proclamations of the President of the United States and the Governor of the State of New York, and on the statutory dates listed in [§8.2](#). Proclamations are followed verbatim as to duration and scope; the College does not interpret, supplement, or curtail their terms.

This protocol is administered in a uniform, nonpartisan manner. The decision to lower a flag in response to a proclamation is not an institutional endorsement of, or comment on, the person, event, or cause referenced in the proclamation.

8.2 Statutory Half-Staff Dates

In addition to Presidential and Gubernatorial proclamations, U.S. Flags are displayed at half-staff on the following statutory dates:

- **Peace Officers Memorial Day (May 15)** — half-staff for the day, unless that day is also Armed Forces Day, in which case the flag is displayed at full-staff.
- **Memorial Day (last Monday in May)** — half-staff from sunrise until noon; full-staff from noon until sunset.
- **Patriot Day (September 11)** — half-staff for the day.
- **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (December 7)** — half-staff for the day.
- **National Firefighters Memorial Day (first Sunday in October, by annual proclamation)** — observed when proclaimed.

8.3 Federal Periods of Mourning (Reference)

Federal law also prescribes periods of mourning that typically generate a Presidential half-staff proclamation. They are listed here as a reference. The College observes half-staff in response to the proclamation, when issued, consistent with [§8.1](#).

- Thirty days from the date of death of a sitting or former President of the United States.
- Ten days from the date of death of the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- From the date of death until interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a former Vice President, a Cabinet Secretary, or the Governor of a state, territory, or possession.
- The day of death and the following day for a member of Congress.

8.4 Process and Notification

On receipt of a Presidential or Gubernatorial proclamation, or on a statutory date listed in [§8.2](#):

- Facilities Management and Campus Safety will lower the U.S. Flags at the permanent flagpoles under their respective operating responsibility for the period specified.
- Communications and Marketing will publish a brief notice on the College's homepage or daily-message channel indicating that flags are at half-staff and linking to the underlying proclamation.
- When raising a flag to half-staff, the flag is first hoisted briskly to the peak and then slowly lowered to the half-staff position. When returning a flag to full-staff, it is again hoisted to the peak before being lowered for the day.

8.5 Athletic Field Flagpoles During Half-Staff Periods

Athletic field flagpoles ([§9](#)) are typically used only on game and event days. Where a flag is displayed at an athletic field during a half-staff observance, it is to be flown at half-staff for the duration of the observance. Athletics Grounds personnel responsible for raising the flag are responsible for confirming the current flag status with Facilities Management or the College's published notice prior to display.

9. Athletic Field Flagpoles

The flagpoles listed in [§6](#) at athletic fields are intended primarily to support intercollegiate competition. Hamilton observes the following standard for their use:

- U.S. Flags are raised in connection with intercollegiate competition (and other approved athletic events) and lowered at the conclusion of the event, on the day of competition.
- Flags are not to be left up overnight unless the pole is properly illuminated; the U.S. Flag Code stipulates that a displayed flag is to be illuminated during hours of darkness.
- Flags should not be raised in inclement weather or wind conditions that would damage the flag; in such cases the flag should remain stowed for the day.

- Athletics Grounds is responsible for the daily raise/lower at all athletic field flagpoles, for the inspection of these flags, and for requesting replacements through FM Work Control.

If a unit within Athletics wishes to fly a flag continuously at an athletic field, that pole must be approved for and equipped with appropriate illumination by Facilities Management, and the responsible unit will assume responsibility for half-staff observance at that pole consistent with [§8](#).

10. Residence Halls

Consistent with the Community Living Policies and Procedures, flags, tapestries, and similar items may not be hung in residence-hall windows or on the exterior of residence-hall windows. This restriction reflects fire-safety, building-envelope, and equitable-treatment considerations and applies regardless of the content or message of the item.

Within a student's individual room and not affixed to or visible through windows, flags and other personal decorations are permitted subject to standard fire-safety requirements (clearance from heat sources, no obstruction of egress or smoke detectors). Items that obstruct ceiling sprinklers, smoke detectors, or doorways will be required to be relocated. All such displays remain subject to other applicable Hamilton College policies, including, without limitation, nondiscrimination and antiharassment policies.

Common areas of residence halls are not display spaces for personal flags. Flags or banners proposed for common-area display may be considered under the Campus Posting Policy.

11. Other Flag Displays

The College's permanent flagpoles, ceremonial flag arrays, and exterior building displays are, unless an exception is granted pursuant to [§14](#), reserved for the four official Hamilton flags identified in [§5](#). The flagpoles are not a public forum and are not available for individuals, student organizations, or third parties to display additional flags. The standing exceptions and approval pathways below govern all other flag displays on Hamilton College property.

11.1 Days-Massolo Center — Standing Exception

The Days-Massolo Multicultural Center serves as a programmatic home for Hamilton's affinity groups. In recognition of that role, and as a long-standing institutional practice, the front entryway of the Days-Massolo Center is authorized to display the following flags:

- The Progress Pride Flag.
- The flag of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) Confederacy.
- The Black Lives Matter flag.

This standing exception is held by the Days-Massolo Center under this policy. Changes to the flags displayed at the Days-Massolo Center, or to the manner of their display, require coordination with the

Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning. This exception applies only to the front entryway of the Days-Massolo Center; it does not extend to other exterior locations.

The flags displayed at the Days-Massolo Center may be temporarily lowered during adverse weather conditions, including high winds, ice, or precipitation that would damage the flags or their mounting. Extended periods of absence during winter months are anticipated and consistent with this policy.

11.2 Commons Dining Hall — Standing Exception

By tradition, Commons Dining Hall displays the national flags of the countries represented in Hamilton's student body. The flags are determined by the Director of International Student Services in coordination with Facilities Management and are updated annually to reflect changes in student composition.

11.3 Other Exterior Displays — Prior Coordination Required

From time to time, the College may receive requests to display additional flags from the windows or exterior of other campus buildings. Examples include a Progress Pride Flag at the Chapel or at Elihu Root during Pride Month. Such displays may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

All proposed exterior flag displays outside the standing exceptions require prior coordination with the Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning. Approval considerations include:

- Building safety, fire code, and building-envelope considerations.
- Duration of display and the presence of an underlying College-sponsored event.
- Consistency with the principles of this policy.
- Coordination, where appropriate, with the Office of the President and Senior Staff.

The Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning may consult with the Office of the President when a request implicates institutional position. Approvals are time-limited and non-precedential.

11.4 Academic and Educational Use

Flags displayed in interior academic, instructional, library, museum, and exhibit spaces in connection with teaching, scholarship, or curated programming (for example, flags of nations represented in a language program or a curated exhibit) are not subject to this policy and remain at the discretion of the responsible department or program, in coordination with Facilities Management for installation matters.

11.5 College-Sponsored Events

Flags displayed temporarily in connection with a College-sponsored event (e.g., flag of a nation honored at a cultural event, athletic conference flags at a championship competition, or commencement-procession flags representing student home countries) are permitted for the duration of the event.

Such displays should be coordinated through the Office of College Events for ceremonies and through the appropriate department for departmental events. The Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning is available to consult on protocol questions.

11.6 Faculty and Staff Office Spaces

Faculty and staff may display flags inside their individual offices consistent with applicable workplace, fire-safety, and non-discrimination policies. Display of flags in publicly visible windows of College buildings (other than residence halls governed by [§10](#), the Days-Massolo Center governed by [§11.1](#), and Commons Dining Hall governed by [§11.2](#)) requires prior coordination under [§11.3](#).

12. Ceremonial Display and Order of Precedence

At Convocation, Commencement, Baccalaureate, Inauguration, and other official ceremonies, flags are displayed consistent with U.S. Flag Code conventions and as set out in this section.

12.1 Position of Honor

When the U.S. Flag is displayed with other flags from separate staffs of the same height, the U.S. Flag occupies the position of honor to the speaker's right (the audience's left).

12.2 Standard Order of Precedence

When the four official Hamilton flags are displayed together at ceremonies, the standard order viewed from the audience, left to right, is:

- **U.S. Flag** (audience's far left / speaker's far right) — the position of honor.
- **Oneida Indian Nation Flag** (next to the U.S. Flag), reflecting the Oneida's status as a sovereign Nation and Hamilton's acknowledgement that the campus sits on Oneida ancestral homelands.
- **New York State Flag** (next to the Hamilton College Flag, on the speaker's left).
- **Hamilton College Flag** (audience's far right / speaker's far left).

All flags should be of equal size when displayed together. Flags should be of equal height; if equal height is not possible, the flags should not be displayed together.

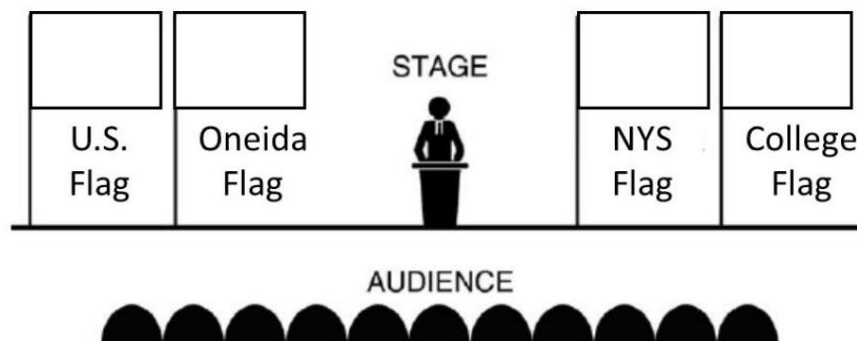


Figure 1. Standard Hamilton Order of Precedence — view from audience.

12.3 Processions

When flags are carried in procession, the U.S. Flag leads, or is positioned to the marching right of any line of flags. The remaining flags follow in the order of precedence set out in [§12.2](#) — Oneida Indian Nation Flag, New York State Flag, and Hamilton College Flag.

12.4 Foreign National and Tribal Flags at Ceremonies

When foreign national flags or additional tribal flags are displayed at an official Hamilton ceremony (for example, the array of country flags at Commencement):

- All national flags, when possible, should be of equal size and equal height.
- Foreign national flags are arranged in alphabetical order in English.
- The U.S. Flag retains the position of honor at the speaker's right.
- Additional tribal-nation flags are accorded the same dignity as national flags.

12.5 Half-Staff and Ceremonies

Where a half-staff observance under [§8](#) falls on the day of a College ceremony, the College's outdoor flagpoles remain at half-staff for the duration of the observance. The College does not curtail or override federal or state proclamations to accommodate a ceremony.

Indoor ceremonial and processional flags are displayed at their normal positions. Half-staff conventions apply to flags on staffs and outdoor flagpoles; they are not extended to indoor ceremonial or processional flags, which by convention are displayed at full position regardless of half-staff observance.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Office	Responsibilities
Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning	Owner of this policy. Approves new flagpole installations, exterior flag-display requests under §11.3 , and policy exceptions. Authoritative interpreter of flag protocol questions for the College. Reviews this policy at least every three years.
Facilities Management	Day-to-day operation of the Miller Road flagpole. Maintenance of all flagpoles and mounting hardware. Stock and disposal of flags. Maintenance of flame-resistance documentation for indoor flag installations. Implementation of half-staff orders at flagpoles under its responsibility. Lighting at illuminated poles.
Campus Safety	Day-to-day operation of the Campus Road / Siuda House flagpole. After-hours and emergency support for flag-related concerns (for example, suspected vandalism, damaged flag in inclement weather, theft).
Athletics Grounds	Day-to-day operation of all athletic-field flagpoles. Inspection and replacement requests. Coordination with Facilities Management on half-staff observance and flagpole maintenance.

Office	Responsibilities
Days-Massolo Center	Maintenance of the standing exception under §11.1 , including the condition and dignified display of the flags at the front entryway.
International Student Services	Maintenance of the standing exception under §11.2 .
Communications and Marketing	Public notification when flags are at half-staff. Maintenance of any “current flag status” web page. Linking to underlying proclamations.
Office of College Events	Ceremonial flag protocol at Convocation, Commencement, Baccalaureate, Inauguration, and other official ceremonies. Coordination of processions and ceremonial flag arrays. Consultation with the Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning on protocol questions.
Office of the President	Final authority on policy (including exceptions involving institutional voice or representation).
Community Living	Enforcement of residence-hall flag standards under §10 .

14. Exceptions and Policy Interpretation

Requests for an exception to this policy, or for prior coordination of an exterior flag display under [§11.3](#), should be directed in writing to the Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning. Exceptions involving institutional voice or representation will be referred to the Office of the President, and the President retains final authority on all exception requests. Routine protocol questions (for example, the correct order of flags at a ceremony) may be directed to the Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning, who serves as Hamilton's protocol resource and may be consulted by the Office of College Events as a matter of practice. The Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning has discretionary authority to interpret and construe this policy, including without limitation to determine whether this policy or the Campus Posting Policy applies to a particular display.

15. Policy Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the Associate Vice President for Facilities and Planning, in consultation with the responsible offices listed in [§13](#). Substantive amendments require approval through the College's policy approval process.

Appendix A: Quick-Reference Notes

A.1 Standard Order of Precedence — Official Hamilton College Flags

When all four official Hamilton flags are displayed together at an official ceremony, the order — viewed from the audience, left to right — is U.S. Flag, Oneida Indian Nation Flag, New York State Flag, Hamilton College Flag. See Figure 1 in [§12.2](#).

A.2 U.S. Flag with One Additional Flag

U.S. Flag (audience left, speaker's right); other flag (audience right, speaker's left).

A.3 On the Same Halyard (Single Pole, Multiple Flags)

U.S. Flag at the peak; other flags below in order of precedence.

A.4 Half-Staff Procedure

Hoist briskly to the peak, lower slowly to half-staff. Reverse when retiring: hoist briskly to the peak, lower for the day.

Appendix B: References

- U.S. Flag Code, 4 U.S.C. §§ 1–10.
- Patriotic Customs, 36 U.S.C. Ch. 3.
- New York State Executive Law Article 19, §§ 400–403.
- New York State Office of General Services.
- Hamilton College Campus Posting Policy.
- Hamilton College Community Living Policies and Procedures.